

REMARKS

Claims 1-8 are all the claims pending in the application.

I. Claim Objections:

The Examiner objects to claims 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7 for the reasons indicated at number paragraph 2 of the Office Action. Applicants have appropriately amended the claims to address all of the Examiner's concerns. For example, claim 1 is amended to provide proper antecedent basis for the terms "the light emitting side" and "the visual recognition side." The claims are also amended by deleting the objectionable terms "its" and "that." Finally, claims 5-7 are amended by deleting the term "a light emitting means" in favor of --said light emitting means--, thereby properly referring back to the light emitting means recited in independent claim 1.

II. Claim Rejections on Prior Art Grounds:

The Examiner rejects claims 1-8 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. 6,340,999 to Masuda et al. ("Masuda"). Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection in view of the following remarks.

Independent claim 1, as amended, recites (among other things):

*wherein the light emitting side of said plane light source device
and the visual recognition side of said liquid crystal display panel
are bonded to each other through an adhesive layer, such that no
air layer is interposed between said plane light source device and
said liquid crystal display panel.*

An exemplary, non-limiting embodiment of this feature is depicted in Fig. 1. Here, the plane light source device 10 includes a light pipe 1 and a light source 2 mounted on an incident side

(i.e., the left side) of the light pipe 1. The light from the light source 2 enters the light pipe 1 and is emitted from “*a light emitting side*” (i.e., the lower surface of the light pipe 1) via the light emitting means “A” provided on the upper surface of the light pipe 1. The liquid crystal display panel 20 includes a multi-layer construction in which a reflective layer 21 is provided beneath a liquid crystal layer 22. The liquid crystal display panel 20 has “*a visual recognition side*” (i.e., the uppermost side of the polarizer 24) that faces the plane light source device 10.

As clearly shown in Fig. 1, the light emitting side of the plane light source device 10 and the visual recognition side of the liquid crystal display panel 20 are bonded to each other through an adhesive layer 12, such that no air layer is interposed between the plane light source device 10 and the liquid crystal display panel 20.¹ This lack of an air interface between the plane light source device 10 and the liquid crystal display panel 20 suppresses reflection at the lower surface of the light pipe 1 so that reflected light does not overlap a displayed image of the liquid crystal display.² At least this feature (as defined by claim 1), in combination with the other limitations recited in claim 1, is not taught or suggested by the prior art relied upon by the rejection grounds.

The rejection grounds rely upon Masuda to teach each and every feature of the invention defined by claim 1. Applicants respectfully disagree.

¹ Spec., p. 3, first full paragraph.

² *Id.*

The Masuda Reference

With reference to Fig. 1 of Masuda, the disclosed device includes a front light 1 that is situated above a reflective type LCD device 5. The front light 1 includes a light guide 3 and a polarization selecting section 4 adhered to the light guide 3 via an adhesive layer 10. In sharp contrast to the claimed invention, however, the adhesive layer 10 connects together constituent elements of the front light 1 (i.e., the light guide 3 and the polarization selecting section), but it does not connect the front light 1 to any constituent element of the LCD device 5. Masuda's straightforward disclosure is explicit in this regard.³ The embodiments depicted in Figs. 3, 9, and 10 of Masuda are similar in these regards.

Furthermore, Masuda teaches that the front light 1 and the LCD device 5 are spaced apart from each other (i.e., they are not attached together). Thus, as shown in Fig. 1, an air layer is interposed between the front light 1 and the LCD device 5.⁴ All of Masuda's disclosed embodiments are similar in this regard. This is in sharp contrast to the invention defined by claim 1.

In summary, claim 1 recites features that are altogether missing from Masuda, inclusive of (1) the plane light source device and the liquid crystal display panel being bonded to each other through an adhesive layer, and (2) no air layer interposed between the plane light source

³ See Masuda, col. 4, l. 14-29; and col. 7, l. 5-23.

⁴ Masuda, col. 9, l. 3-20.

AMENDMENT UNDER 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
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device and the liquid crystal display panel. Consequently, the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the raised anticipation rejection.

For these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 1 is patentable, and that claims 2-8 are patentable at least by virtue of their dependencies.

In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

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